its Export Promotion Councils, including the AEPC, more helpful to the exporters.

America's Opposition to India's Membership in APEC

2810. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the U.S. does not want India to be included in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum now as the pace of Indian liberalisation fails to measure upto APEC standards; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government of India in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) We are not aware of any such opposition by USA. In fact, APEC had decided in November 1993 to impose a moratorium for three years on admission of new members into APEC. The recent APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in Philippines during November 1996 did not admit any new member, but decided to evolve the criteria for admission of new members to be finalised at the next APEC Summit scheduled at Vancouver in 1997.

India had formally conveyed to members of APEC its interest in associating with APEC and participating in its activities. This has been taken up on a sustained basis with APEC member economics both directly as well as through our diplomatic Missions in these countries. The subject of India's membership has also been raised with individual APEC member economics during high level bilateral interactions. For example, the subject was taken up at the Foreign Ministers level during the ASEAN-Post Ministerial Conference in Jakarta in July 1996. It has also been discussed bilaterally during other ministerial meetings.

India will continue to reiterate its interest in membership of APEC on the basis of its geographical location, degree of trade and investment interaction and potential, size of India's economy, and ability to contribute to larger Asia-Pacific economic cooperation and liberalisation.

Filling up of post of Firemen reserved for OBC in Central Vehicle Depot, Delhi Cantt.

2811. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that candidates sponsored by the Emplyment Exchange in Group 'D' post (Firemen) in the reserved category of OBC who were declared selected in the Central Vehicle Depot, Delhi Cantt are waiting for joining their duties for a long period;

(b) whetehr it is also a fact that all selection formalities of the said selected candidates have since been completed;

(c) if so, the reasons for not allowing them to join their duties well in time; and

(d) the action contemplated in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Yes, Sir. Three candidates belonging to OBC category were selected for the post of Fireman on 6th September, 1995 in Central Vehicle Depot, Delhi Cantt. and are awaiting the issue of appointment letters.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The selected persons could not be given appointment as an application in the Principal Bench, Central Administrative Tribunal, New Delhi was filled by an SC candidate, who was selected earlier in CVD Delhi Cantt. against this selection and the Court has issued interim orders.

Hydrological Survey in Orissa

2812. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Ground Water

Board has undertaken the hydrolocical survey in some selected States;

(b) if so, State-wise details thereof;

(c) whether any survey has been conducted in Orissa; and

(d) if so, the details of the survey undertaken in that State?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Modernisation of Cotton Processing Factories

2813. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of cotton processing factories in the country;

(b) whether there is any plan to modernise the processing units; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the assistance Government propose to provide to Cooperative sectors in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI) is giving financial incentives for improving general standards of ginning processing and upgradation of cotton with the objective of improving quality of ginning, pressing and packing and controlling contamination in cotton.

(c) In order to bring about improvement in the existing cooperative ginning and pressing factories, the Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI) alongwith Rajasthan Marketing Federation (RAJFED) has taken seven cooperative factories on lease basis during the 1996-97 cotton season. In other cotton growing states also, the CCI through its branch offices, encourages the engagement of the cooperative ginning and pressing factories for its processing work on preferential basis.

Loan for Water Resources Consolidation Project in Orissa

2814. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Orissa had sought the help of the Centre to implement a Water Resources Consolidation Project (WRCP);

(b) whether the Government of Orissa needed a loan of more than 1000 crores for its WRCP;

(c) whether the Central Government have made negotiation with the World Bank to ensure the loan required by the State Government of Orissa; and

(d) if so, the progress of releasing the loan to Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Orissa Water Resources Consolidation Project is being implemented by the Government of Orissa with World Bank assistance of US$ 290 million (Rs. 1035.30 crores approximately). The negotiations with the World Bank were made by the Central Government and State Government on 5th January, 1996. The Project aims to improve agriculture productivity through modernisation and rehabilitation of existing project and improving farmers operational efficiency through participatory management.

(d) As on 30th November, 1996, an amount of US$ 175.11 million (Rs. 62.51 crores approximately) of loan has been disbursed to the Government of Orissa.

Custodial Deaths in the Country

2815. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the press